

2022 MOST IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN SPORTS

10 Billie Jean King Enterprises Continues Women's Hockey Support

In May 2022, after being part of a women's hockey game that was played at Madison Square Garden and broadcast live on national TV in 2021, Billie Jean King Enterprises entered into a [formal agreement with the Professional Women's Hockey Player's Association](#), along with The Mark Walter Group, to support the launch of a new women's professional league. The 2022-23 Secret Dream Gap Tour's season began in October and runs through January.



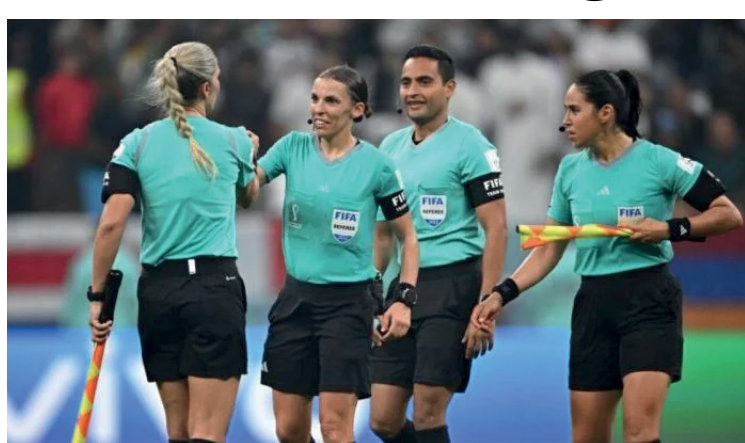
9 Fans of Women's Sports Have Their Own Network



Fast Studios, founded in 2020 by ad executive Stuart McLean, originally launched a streaming service with a focus on auto racing and obstacle-course competitions. Recognizing the growth in viewership for women's sports, sponsorship and advertising

dollars, in November Fast Studios crossed over to women's sports. The Womensports Network is a free, ad-supported service available on Amazon's Freevee, Fox's Tubi, Roku and FubuTV and smart TVs.

8 World Cup: 1st All-Female Officiating Crew



On one of the largest stages for sports, Stéphanie Frappart, Neuza Back, and Karen Diaz made history as the first all-female on-field officiating crew for a FIFA World Cup soccer match. The threesome oversaw the matchup between Germany and Costa Rica, while a fourth referee (a man) handled player substitutions, and an American woman, Kay Nesbitt, served as the offside video assistant referee.



7 Serena Williams Retires Or Did She?

Tennis star Serena Williams has been included in 13 of the 21 annual "Most Important Moments in Sports" editions of REAL SPORTS magazine and was covered in the bimonthly editions numerous times. Covering her careers, on and off the court, has been an extraordinary pleasure for our photographers and writers as we showcased Williams' accomplishments for our readers and followers. This Vogue magazine image and story from September (where she announced her retirement) embodies the well-rounded person she is: excelling on the court, in business and in life, while overcoming extraordinary odds and challenges.

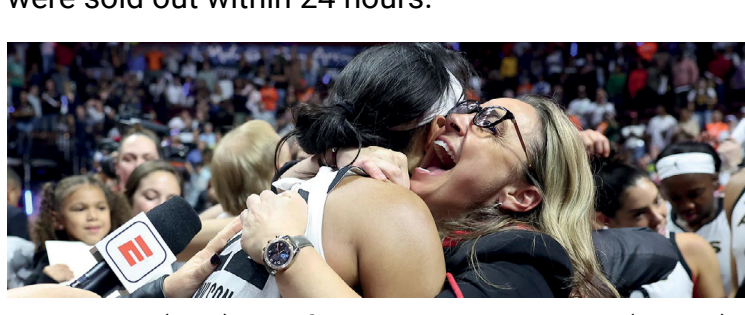
6 Attendance Records for Women's Soccer



Although 2022 is the year for the men's World Cup, attendance numbers for women's soccer in Europe has been tremendous. Twice in the Champions League semifinals more than 90,000 fans packed stadiums to watch women's soccer. Both events were sold out within 24 hours.

5 Million-Dollar Bet Pays Off

Mark Davis, the owner of the Las Vegas Aces, took a chance to pay \$1 million annually to the coach he believed would lead his team to a championship. As covered in REAL SPORTS in December 2021, Becky Hammon accepted the challenge to be that head coach, putting the franchise's all-time leader in assists (1,333),



3-pointers (498) and free throw percentage (92.1%) at the helm. Hammon's strengths included being a three-time All-Star who also earned three All-WNBA Team honors when she was a player and a coaching background of working for eight years as an NBA assistant with San Antonio Spurs head coach Gregg Popovich. Davis' all-in bet resulted in Hammon winning big in her first year as a head coach in the WNBA – the Aces won the best-of-five series against the Connecticut Sun 3-1 for the franchise's first WNBA title.

4 Title IX Celebrates 50 Years



The landmark legislation prohibits sex discrimination in education programs or activities that receive federal funding. Many have covered the breadth of its impact and continued controversy (click the photo to see Newsweek's coverage). While the legislation did not explicitly mention athletics, it is what it is most known for.

3 Coaching and Sex Scandals Plague NWSL/Women's Soccer



This is an issue that dates back into the 1990s (if not earlier), long before the National Women's Soccer League, let alone the Women's United Soccer

Association, the U.S. national team, and college powerhouses came along. An [investigative report](#) commissioned by the United States Soccer Federation delineates how repeatedly turning a blind eye on the misuse of power can have devastating impact on athletes. The report is a must-read for female athletes and their support systems if our nation is to root out this predatory abuse of power.

2 \$60 Million Price Tag?



In the aftermath of the National Women's Soccer League sex and coaching scandals, one of the league's most successful franchises was put up for sale. On Dec. 1, the Portland Thorns was put on the block for a reported \$60 million. In addition, Thorns owner Merritt Paulson, who also owns the Portland Timbers, pledged \$1 million toward establishing an NWSL Player Safety Office.

1 Brittney Griner – Political Pawn



Sentenced to serve nine years in a Russian labor colony for possession of a small amount of cannabis oil in a vape pen, WNBA star Brittney Griner has been on an unexpected global stage for nearly 10 months. In early December, the Russians said they would not publicly disclose any details regarding prisoner swaps and said there were no plans to engage with the Biden administration before the end of the year. However, on Dec. 8 a prisoner swap involving Griner and Viktor Bout took place with the assistance of the United Arab Emirates. We placed Griner on the cover of REAL SPORTS in 2012 because of her immense talent. Ten years later, we ask our readers to keep her present in their minds and spirits as she re-acclimates and that you keep other detained Americans, including Paul Whelan, in your thoughts, actions, and political discussions.

2022 Sportsperson of the Year: Dawn Staley



Dawn Staley, the first to win the Naismith Award as a player and coach, won the coaching honor again in 2022 after leading the South Carolina Gamecocks to its second NCAA Women's Basketball Championship. Staley built the program from scratch after joining as head coach in 2008. On April 3, 2022, the Gamecocks defeated the Connecticut Huskies 64-49 for the title. It was UConn's first loss in a championship game after 11 prior wins. The championship is another check in a long and storied career for Staley, which includes three Olympic Gold Medals as a player and one as a head coach, as well as being only the second individual to both play for and coach a No.

1-ranked team. During the 2021-2022 season, Staley led the Gamecocks to a No. 1 ranking from start to finish, and in doing so, she became the first black Division I basketball coach (male or female) to win multiple championships. The University of South Carolina Trustees rewarded Staley handsomely for her achievements, signing her to a \$22.4 million, seven-year contract at the start of the season, putting her among the highest-paid women's college basketball.